

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of processing an image before printing of the image by a print provider, the method comprising the steps of:
- 5 defining a print processing system controller having a network communication link;
- receiving at the print processing system controller a print request and a data file for the image via the network communication link; and
- determining an appropriate application for the image via the print
- 10 processing system controller, including processing the print request and the data file for the image to determine the appropriate application for the image.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the network communication link includes an Internet communication link.
- 15
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
- defining the network communication link between a customer and the print processing system controller, and wherein the step of receiving the print request and the data file for the image includes receiving the print request and
- 20 the data file for the image from the customer via the network communication link.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
- defining the network communication link between a customer and the
- 25 print processing system controller; and
- reporting the appropriate application for the image to the customer via the network communication link.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
- 30 defining the network communication link between the print provider and the print processing system controller, and wherein the step of receiving the print

request and the data file for the image includes receiving the print request and the data file for the image from the print provider via the network communication link.

- 5 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
 defining the network communication link between the print processing
 system controller and at least one of a content provider offering a plurality of
 images and an application provider offering an application for the image, and
 wherein the step of receiving the print request and the data file for the image
10 includes receiving the print request and the data file for the image from the at
 least one of the content provider and the application provider via the network
 communication link.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the print request
15 and the data file for the image includes specifying an application for the image,
 and wherein the step of determining the appropriate application for the image
 includes determining whether the application is appropriate for the image.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the print request
20 and the data file for the image includes specifying at least one of a print medium
 size and a print medium type for the image, and wherein the step of determining
 the appropriate application for the image includes determining whether the at
 least one of the print medium size and the print medium type is appropriate for
 the image.
- 25 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the print request
 and the data file for the image includes receiving a request for a plurality of
 appropriate applications for the image.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining the appropriate application for the image includes determining an appropriate print medium size for the image.

5 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining the appropriate application for the image includes determining an appropriate quality for the image.

10 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining the appropriate application for the image includes processing the data file for the image and determining from the data file at least one of a print resolution of the image, a bit depth of the image, a size of the image, a file size of the image, and a quality of the image.

15 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of receiving the print request and the data file for the image includes specifying at least one of a print medium size and a print medium type for the image, and wherein the step of determining the appropriate application for the image further includes determining whether the at least one of the print medium size and the print medium type is appropriate
20 for the image.

14. A system for processing an image before printing of the image by a print provider, the system comprising:
a print processing system controller adapted to receive a print request and
25 a data file for the image, and process the print request and the data file to determine an appropriate application for the image.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the print processing system controller is configured to communicate via a network communication link, and wherein the
30 print processing system controller is adapted to receive the print request and the data file for the image via the network communication link.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the network communication link is an Internet communication link.

5 17. The system of claim 15, wherein the network communication link is defined between a customer and the print processing system controller, and wherein the print processing system controller is adapted to receive the print request and the data file for the image from the customer via the network communication link.

10 18. The system of claim 15, wherein the network communication link is defined between a customer and the print processing system controller, and wherein the print processing system controller is adapted to report the appropriate application for the image to the customer via the network communication link.

15 19. The system of claim 15, wherein the network communication link is defined between the print provider and the print processing system controller, and wherein the print processing system controller is adapted to receive the print request and the data file for the image from the print provider via the network communication link.

20 20. The system of claim 15, wherein the network communication link is defined between the print processing system controller and at least one of a content provider offering a plurality of images and an application provider offering an application for the image, and wherein the print processing controller is adapted to receive the print request and the data file for the image from the at least one of the content provider and the application provider via the network communication link.

30

21. The system of claim 14, wherein the print request specifies an application for the image, and wherein the print processing system controller is adapted to determine whether the application is appropriate for the image.

5 22. The system of claim 14, wherein the print request specifies at least one of a print medium size and a print medium type for the image, and wherein the print processing system controller is adapted to determine whether the at least one of the print medium size and the print medium type is appropriate for the image.

10 23. The system of claim 14, wherein the print request includes a request for a plurality of appropriate applications for the image.

15 24. The system of claim 14, wherein the appropriate application for the image includes an appropriate print medium size for the image.

25. The system of claim 14, wherein the appropriate application for the image includes an appropriate quality for the image.

20 26. The system of claim 14, wherein the appropriate application for the image is based on at least one of a print resolution of the image, a bit depth of the image, a size of the image, a file size of the image, and a quality of the image.